

Abstract 506

TITLE: International Approaches to Harm Reduction

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ISSUE: The controversy surrounding harm reduction programming and syringe exchange continues in the U.S. In other countries a number of successful programs available to people at risk for HIV infection through injection drug use are based on harm reduction approaches.

SETTING: The geographic locations of the programs featured in this slide presentation are France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. All programs featured are in urban areas. The intended audience for this presentation is wide. It could potentially include parties interested in injection drug use, substance abuse, HIV prevention advocacy, policy making, and legislation.

PROJECT: The proposed presentation is a slideshow and discussion with handouts featuring five different programs from the above-listed countries. These programs involve a variety of interventions including methadone maintenance, outpatient counseling services, syringe exchange, syringe distribution machines, and legal injection rooms. Literature and information from the programs will be distributed, and examples of special packaging of injection equipment for pharmacy sale will also be featured.

RESULTS: It is the goal that the participants acquire a different experience, and therefore perspective, of harm reduction and various interventions through the slide presentation of this workshop. It is also an objective of the presentation that sensory exposure to these programs will have a greater impact on the observer's understanding than one may garner from the experience acquired through literature and written communication. Previous presentations of this slide show generated immediate healthy discussions regarding harm reduction interventions.

LESSONS LEARNED: The presentation is descriptive rather than prescriptive in regard to comparison of these types of programs to those commonly found, or potentially manageable, in the U.S. Harm reduction programming has had significant impact on the infection rate among the IDU populations in the areas featured in the slide presentation.

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